

LICENSING & PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 19th August, 2025
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present: Deputy Mayor. Councillor Joan Whieldon (Chair)

Councillors:	Johnson	Sweeney	Allport
	Whitmore	Adcock	J Williams
	Barker MBE	Dymond	G Williams
	Heesom	Wright	Edgington-Plunkett

Apologies: Councillor(s) Skelding

Substitutes: Councillor David Hutchison (In place of Councillor Craig Skelding)

Officers:	Matthew Burton	Licensing Administration Team Manager
	Geoff Durham	Civic & Member Support Officer
	Gillian Taylor	Housing Manager

Also in attendance:

1. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO LICENSING MATTERS**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March, 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **DRAFT STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY 2025-2030**

Consideration was given to a report advising Members of a draft Statement of Licensing Policy and to seek approval for public consultation.

The Council was required to revise and publish its Statement of Licensing Policy every 5 years and the next due date was 6 January, 2026. Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 2.8 of the report which set out the timelines for the revision.

The draft proposed Policy was attached at Appendix A with the proposed changes which were listed at paragraph 2.6 of the report.

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Resolved: That the draft statement of Licensing Policy be issued for public consultation and that the timetable, set out at section 2.8 of the report, be approved.

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5. MINUTES OF LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June, 2025 be received.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO PUBLIC PROTECTION MATTERS

There were no declarations of interest stated.

7. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2025/26 AND REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE IN 2024/25

Consideration was given to a report advising Members of work planned by the Food and Safety Team for 2025/26 and to review the performance for 2024/25. The Council had a statutory duty to maintain a register of all food businesses in the Borough.

The Plan, which was attached at Appendix A, identified three sources within the Food Safety team and their wider role.

Paragraph 2.4 of the Plan identified the number of registered food premises in the Borough with 1020 being registered as of 1 April, 2025.

Paragraph 3.1 showed the food inspection programme for 2025/26 with 490 due to be inspected. The table at page 79 of the agenda showed the number of premises in each rating.

Table 3.2 showed the number of complaints received which had fallen over the last three years.

Councillor Adcock stated that the vast majority of premises were of a high standard for hygiene and moved that the report be accepted.

Resolved: That the Food Safety Service Plan for 2025/26 be received and endorsed.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. REVOCATION OF THE KIDSGROVE AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA

Consideration was given to a report advising on the outcome of a consultation on the making of an order to revoke the Kidsgrove Air Quality Management Area and to seek acceptance and confirmation of the revocation order. The Consultation Report was attached as Appendix A, at page 95 of the agenda.

Members were referred to the map on page 93 of the agenda which showed the location of the Air Quality Management Area – along Liverpool Road to the junctions with Heathcote Street and Gloucester Road where there was often queuing traffic at

peak times. The figures had reduced year on year and was now below the legal requirement which was believed to be due to the increased uptake of lower emission vehicles.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had evaluated the data and had advised that the Air Quality Management Area could be revoked.

Councillor Sweeney stated that this was good news for anyone selling their homes in that location.

Resolved: That the Air Quality Management Area Number 1 - Kidsgrove - Revocation Order 2025, to take effect from the 20th August 2025, be approved.

[Watch the debate here](#)

9. **REVOCATION OF THE MAYBANK, WOLSTANTON & PORTHILL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA**

Consideration was given to a report advising on the outcome of a consultation on the making of an order to revoke the May Bank, Wolstanton and Porthill Air Quality Management Area and to seek acceptance and confirmation of the revocation order. The Consultation Report was attached as Appendix A, at page 121 of the agenda.

Members were referred to the map on page 120 of the agenda which showed the location of the Air Quality Management Area – at the bottom of Porthill Bank and Vale View and May Bank High Street where there was often traffic congestion at peak times. The figures had reduced year on year and was now below the legal requirement which was believed to be due to the increased uptake of lower emission vehicles.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had evaluated the data and had advised that the Air Quality Management Area could be revoked.

Councillor Hutchinson referred to the receptors in table 1 at paragraph 2.3 stating that the reduction had been between 19 and 37 percent which was great news.

Resolved: That the Air Quality Management Area Number 3 – May Bank, Wolstanton and Porthill - Revocation Order 2025, to take effect from the 20th August 2025, be approved.

[Watch the debate here](#)

10. **TAXI LICENSING FRAMEWORK CONSULTATIONS 2025**

Consideration was given to a report informing Members of two recent Government consultations in relation to the future of the taxi and private hire trade.

The first consultation involved a call for evidence from the Transport Committee as to whether or not the current licensing framework was fit for purpose and where it could be improved. There had been calls for a whole review of the framework for a long time, to make it fit for purpose and bring it up to date.

There were around three hundred local authorities – each with their own Licensing Policies – which did not promote consistency. This meant that some individuals were

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able to 'licence shop' and find an authority that may give them a licence when they have been unable to obtain one from their own local authority. This would then allow drivers to go back and work in the area where they had previously been refused or revoked.

The table at paragraph 2.9 showed the reductions in licensing numbers since 2019, with a reduction of nearly 47% of drivers, 35% Hackney Carriages and 36% of private hire vehicles.

The second consultation sought views on a proposed Statutory Instrument (SI) relating to automated passenger services and supporting the deployment of commercial self-driving pilots.

Councillor John Williams asked if it was true that taxi drivers did not have to put a sign on their doors showing which company they worked for. Members were advised that this would be covered in the next report. Different local authorities had different rules and policies.

The Chair stated that the report had highlighted that, whilst the legislation was there, each authority was able to interpret it in their own way – some doing it to offer greater protection to its residents and visitors and others just to get more drivers.

Councillor Adcock stated that the current system punished authorities with higher safety standards and rewarded those with lower standards. He asked if there was a centralised national register for taxi drivers and was it mandatory for local authorities to sign up to.

There was a register but it only held the names of drivers who had had their licence revoked, refused or suspended. Every licensing authority was legally bound to look at the register when considering new applications and to consult the authority that had made the entry onto the register. This would not mean they had to refuse an application but had to take the information into account.

The Chair stated that, should a taxi driver be refused at Newcastle – for legitimate reasons and another authority issued that person a licence, their culpability would greatly heighten with any losses, damage or injury to the person harmed.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
 - (ii) That Officers submit a response, in agreement with the Chair and Portfolio Holder, to the call for evidence in relation to the Transport Committee's Inquiry into the Licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles; and
 - (iii) That Officers submit a response, in agreement with the Chair and Portfolio Holder, to the Department for Transport consultation in relation to Automated passenger services: permitting scheme.

[Watch the debate here](#)

11. TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY 2026-2030

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Consideration was given to a report regarding the proposed Taxi Licensing Policy, following external consultation.

A report regarding the policy had been brought to this Committee on 29 October, 2024, with draft proposal.

The consultation had six main points which were listed at paragraph 2.4 of the report. Twenty two responses to the consultation were received with 19 being from licence holders. A summary of their responses was listed at paragraph 2.8 of the report with full responses at Appendix D.

Regarding door livery. It had been suggested to remove it from private hire vehicles which was in line with best practice guidance from the Department of Transport. Following discussions with various sources and having carried out inspections, it was found to be difficult to locate taxis with just the plates. This Council had therefore now decided to keep door livery for private hire vehicles.

Amendments to the vehicle criteria were outlined at paragraph 2.10. Paragraph 2.11 outlined proposals for executive private hire vehicles.

Councillor Adcock stated that it was good that Stoke and Newcastle were working together to have the same standards and asked if other local authorities were going to follow the same emissions guidelines.

There was a Board within Staffordshire County Council that met regularly around amending their Taxi Policies to look at emission standards rather than vehicle ages; others had done it slightly differently to Newcastle and Stoke. It was hoped that there would be a form of National Standards to promote it across all local authorities.

Councillor Adcock asked if concerns regarding door signage damaging vehicles were valid ones.

Newcastle did not mandate how signage was stuck to the doors. The magnetic ones had not been known to damage vehicles; physical stickers may, however cause some slight damage.

Councillor Hutchison asked why, for the knowledge test, it had changed from 75% for each section to 75% overall.

In the last two years the taxi knowledge test had been amended with a couple of sections being removed as training had been consolidated and there was a test in relation to those. Some sections had more questions than others so that people who previously would have failed the test over minor errors would now pass.

Councillor Gill Williams was pleased that door signage was being retained as it would protect the public.

Councillor Sweeney congratulated the Licensing Team stating that it was an excellent policy.

Councillor John Williams was pleased that taxi drivers now had to wear their badges or display them.

Resolved: (i) That the proposed policy document be agreed

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- (ii) That the policy document take effect from 1 January, 2026

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12. MINUTES OF PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 7 May and 11 June, 2025 be received.

13. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

There was no confidential business.

14. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

**Deputy Mayor. Councillor Joan Whieldon
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.16 pm